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GEN. DAVID HUTCHINSON

GEN. GEORGE DOSTER

Principals tell inside story of Bay of Pigs invasion attempt.

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1 Jet Could Have Saved the Day, Says General

BY PETER REICH

Aviation Writer

A single American jet fighter might have turned the tide of victory in the Bay of Pigs fiasco, a retired air force general said today.

He is Maj. Gen. David W. Hutchinson, now an oil man in Oklahoma City. Hutchinson was commanding general of the 9th tactical air force at Shaw air base in South Carolina in 1961.

The 9th air force had supervision of the Alabama Air National guard. Brig. Gen. G. Reid Doster, the guard's commanding general, has been identified as in charge of tactical air operations at the Bay of Pigs.

One Plane Could Save It

Gen. Hutchinson declared:

"If what I have read in the newspapers is true—that the invaders' bomber force was destroyed by two trailing twin-jet aircraft fitted with machine guns—then one air force jet fighter plane could have saved the whole operation."

Gen. Hutchinson said he could not say for certain whether or not such a report is true. He has been reported to have given fighter support for his predecessor.

Following disclosure in Chicago's American of the role American flyers played in the ill-fated Cuban invasion of 1961, Maj. Gen. David W. Hutchinson [ret.] for the first time spoke out on the part he had in the operation. Chicago's American interviewed the general by long-distance telephone.

driven B-26 bombers, but he asserted:

"It is my personal opinion that a qualified officer like Gen. Doster would not have sent unprotected B-26s against probable jet fighter interception."

'Explained Mission'

Gen. Hutchinson insisted that the regular air force had nothing to do with the Bay of Pigs operation. However, he said, "Gen. Doster came to me and explained what his mission was."

Gen. Hutchinson said five American pilots were killed while flying for the rebels, asserting:

"Four have been identified. I don't know who the fifth man was, and I did not say he was lost in action—I said he was lost at some time during the period."

The general said about a dozen bomber pilots of the Ala-

bama air national guard took leaves of absence in 1961 to help train the Cuban invaders. He said they draw their pay from the Central Intelligence agency (CIA).

'Five of Men Killed'

Gen. Hutchinson related:

"Gen. Doster came to my office and asked if he and about a dozen of his B-26 pilots could be given leave so they might go out of the country for four or five months. They took their leaves on civilian status."

"When Gen. Doster got back, he saw me first before he talked to anyone. He was heartbroken. Five of his men had been killed, and all of their efforts went up in the air in a matter of minutes."

'Plenty to Tell'

Gen. Hutchinson said he feels sure Gen. Doster would like to be interviewed.

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